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July 7, 1953

MEMORANDUM TO THE BOARD OF FEB -- General Walter Bedell Smith
✓ Mr. Allen W. Dulles
Governor Harold E. Stassen

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FROM: [REDACTED]

STRAWS-IN-THE-WIND DEPARTMENT
OR POSSIBLY
COALS-TO-NEWCASTLE DEPARTMENT

Just as the planning for Bermuda was shifting into high gear, the event was called off. Now, with the Foreign Ministers meeting I don't know how much in the way of solid results is planned, or achievable.

However, several events of the past week seem to indicate the virtual necessity of at least one solid piece of tripartite business coming out soon, and the Foreign Ministers Conference is the most logical news peg.

This morning, Reuters out of Berlin carried the following:

"Eastern Liberal Party members said today that Russia is planning to propose a Five Power Conference on Germany -- with the fifth power to be Communist China. The East Germans said they were told about a new Soviet scheme by Russian circles in East Berlin.

"Russia will offer to pull out of Austria in order to get Western agreement on a united, neutralized Germany, the East German sources said.

State Dept., NSC reviews completed

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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"Under the plan the three big Western powers would have to give up any 'preliminary conference' -- presumably the postponed top-level Bermuda talks among Britain, France, and the United States.

"These sources said the plan would be routed through normal diplomatic channels and would include a Soviet 'bargain' offer to give up her 'special position' in Austria."

Yesterday, George Meany and Walter Reuther cabled the President as follows. (No reply has yet been made to this, but there is a possibility that the President may refer to it at his Wednesday press conference.)

"On behalf 16 million American workers whose representatives are in Stockholm Sweden today attending Third World Congress International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. We call upon Government of United States immediately to take initiative in aiding workers of Soviet occupied Germany in their struggle against Soviet totalitarianism. Assembled delegates at ICKTU World Congress, who speak for more than 53 million workers throughout world have unanimously and with American labour's uncompromising support, voted to aid their fellow workers in East Germany in every manner possible. We ask that our Government press for immediate negotiations for free elections in a united Germany, for establishment of free political parties and free trade unions, and for the immediate liberation of German workers imprisoned by the Soviet occupation authorities for their resistance June 17. We further call for submission of formal complaint to United Nations against the Soviet Union's violation of human rights and freedom of association in Soviet occupied Germany. In the history of mankind's struggle for liberty, June 17 will go down as memorable moment during which heroic German workers fought not only for themselves but also battle for all free peoples of the world. Their struggle must have unyielding support of all who cherish freedom. We ask your immediate consideration of our plea.

George Meany President American Federation of Labour
Walter Reuther President Congress of Industrial
Organizations."

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Ever since June 17, the Communists have been indulging in a long series of most radical reforms in practically every satellite country -- so much so that they may almost immediately be able to point to a very plausible and appealing set of the kind of "deeds" the President called for on April 16th.

It seems to me that with all these straws in the wind, it would be the better part of international wisdom, political tactics, and cold-war action, for our side boldly to grasp the nettle of a Four Power Conference on Germany immediately, and be the first to stake out that claim.

I am not attempting to go into the detail as to whether or not this would be a conference of the big boys, or the Foreign Ministers, or what have you. The State Department will know best on that.

What I am attempting to say is that such a conference is becoming more and more inescapable -- in fact, it might pop tomorrow.

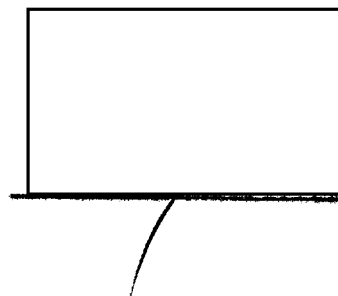
Furthermore, another development that appears to be inescapable is that we will either have a unified Germany as an ally, because it has seen us try to take positive action which was blocked by the Russians, or a unified Germany gradually veering toward a Russian alliance, because of our inaction, or a disgruntled and sullen divided Germany, hating Russia and disgusted with us.

I hope that it will be possible to have a ringing call for such a conference on the subject of free elections leading to German

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unification, with Germany an EDC member, along the lines of the proposed letter from the President to Adenauer, the big item on the Foreign Ministers Conference -- and let us pray that the enemy doesn't get the jump on us.



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